

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **A1**NEW YORK TIMES
5 March 1967

American Gets Life for Giving Secrets to Israel

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 4 — Jonathan Jay Pollard, a former civilian intelligence analyst for the Navy who pleaded guilty to spying for Israel, was sentenced to life in prison today in a highly emotional session in Federal District Court here.

As Judge Aubrey E. Robinson Jr. pronounced sentence on the defendant, Mr. Pollard's wife, Anne Henderson Pollard, fell to floor screaming, "No! No!" in front of the crowded, hushed courtroom.

Helped to her feet by her husband, Mrs. Pollard, 26 years old, regained her composure long enough to hear the judge sentence her to two concurrent five-year prison terms for her role in the espionage conspiracy. Mrs. Pollard, who had pleaded guilty to conspiracy to receive embezzled Government property and to possession of national defense documents, again screamed and was led away sobbing by Federal marshals.

The sentencing of Mr. Pollard, 32, who had access to sensitive documents through his position with the Navy's Anti-Terrorist Alert Center in Suitland, Md., closes the latest of a recent series of celebrated spy cases in this country.

Among them, John A. Walker Jr., a retired chief warrant officer in the Navy, was sentenced last year to life in prison with a recommendation from the judge for no parole after pleading guilty to providing classified Navy documents to the Soviet Union. Jerry A. Whitworth, his partner, was sentenced to 365 years in prison and fined \$410,000, and Michael L. Walker, his son, was sentenced to 25 years in prison with a recommendation of no parole.

In the Pollard case, the Justice Department had not specifically asked for a life sentence, but for "substantial" incarceration. That request came as part of the plea agreement under which the Pollards pleaded guilty and promised to cooperate with the authorities in pursuing the investigation.

Israeli's Indictment Cited

Richard A. Hibey, the lawyer for Mr. Pollard, noted today that his client's assistance had been instrumental in the indictment obtained by the Government yesterday against a high-ranking Israeli Air Force officer, Aviem Sella, who was accused of espionage.

But Judge Robinson's decision to sentence Mr. Pollard, a Stanford graduate who attended the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, to the maximum sentence for espionage had been signaled earlier in the proceedings. The judge disputed defense arguments that Mr. Pollard's crime in providing classified information to Israel had not harmed the United States because Israel is a close ally.

"The damage here is not serious damage to the United States," Mr. Hibey told Judge Robinson.

But the judge said, "I fail to see how you can make that claim," in view of a classified affidavit from Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger that outlined the precise nature of the harm done to United States intelligence sources and methods.

Parole Called Unlikely

Later, out of court, the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, Joseph E. diGenova, said the "severity of the sentence is the best evidence of the gravity of the damage done to national security by Mr. Pollard's espionage operation."

Mr. diGenova added that, given the factors parole boards take into account, "It's highly unlikely that he'll become eligible for parole." He added that Mrs. Pollard would probably serve most of her sentence before being released.

An assistant United States Attorney, Charles S. Leeper, also disputed the couple's arguments that Mr. Pollard did not mean to injure the United States.

"This defendant has admitted that he sold to Israel a volume of classified documents 10 feet by 6 feet by 6 feet," Mr. Leeper said, drawing a picture in the air to suggest the magnitude of the theft. He said Mr. Pollard provided Israel with thousands of pages, including secret information on the location of American ships and training exercises.

In another affidavit that Mr. Weinberger submitted to the court Tuesday, the Defense Secretary said, "It is difficult for me, even in the so-called year of the spy, to conceive of a greater harm to national security than that caused by the defendant in view of the breadth, the critical importance to the U.S., and the high sensitivity of the information he sold to Israel."

Intentions Said Corrupted

Mr. Hibey, in pleading for leniency for Mr. Pollard, said his client's commitment to the continued existence of Israel had led him to espionage. But Mr. Pollard's motivation to help Israel, he said, "was soiled by the addictive nature of accepting money" once the Israelis began to pay him.

Then "the money corrupted him," Mr. Hibey acknowledged, referring to more than \$45,000 in cash that Mr. Pollard received with other benefits and promises of more money.

Dressed somberly in a black three-piece suit and white shirt, Mr. Pollard told Judge Robinson: "I broke faith. I took the law into my own hands," and "I took sectarianism to an illogical extreme."

"While my motives may have been well-meaning, they cannot by any stretch of the imagination excuse my violation of the law," he said.

He said his aim was not to hurt the United States, but to help an ally. That, however, "is cold comfort to me," he said, adding: "I broke the law. I should not have done it."

Mercury Asked for Wife

He added in a soft, even voice that in addition to betraying the trust of "the nation," he had violated "another, more ancient, a little more sacred trust — the trust a wife implicitly places in her husband."

"Unfortunately, I sacrificed her, inadvertently, on the altar, it is safe to say, of political ideology," he said, urging the court "humbly and sincerely" to show her "mercy."

"She was as much a victim of my cultural arrogance as anyone else," Mr. Pollard said. "I took advantage of her, and now she must pay the penalty."

Mrs. Pollard, who, with her husband pleaded guilty last June, faced a potential sentence of 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$500,000. But she had asked for probation, especially in light of what her lawyer described as a serious and painful digestive tract illness that has caused her to lose 60 pounds.

She Sought China Pact

In addition to the help she provided her husband, including trying to hide some of the documents once his activities were detected, according to Federal prosecutors, Mrs. Pollard used classified information on the People's Republic of China, obtained by her husband, in an effort to win a public relations contract with the embassy here.

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Her arms wrapped tightly across her body, Mrs. Pollard also addressed Judge Robinson, delivering a teary pledge of love for her husband and a dramatic plea for leniency on his behalf. She told the judge that her husband was "the most wonderful man I have ever laid eyes on in my life."

"I pray to God every single day I'll be reunited with my husband," Mrs. Pollard said, her voice breaking. "That's all I live for. He is everything in the world to me. I need him so much right now. He is my best friend. My greatest love."

Justice Department officials have said that they are trying to revoke immunity previously granted to three other Israeli conspirators involved in the Pollard spy ring. If successful, they said, they will seek to indict them, as well.